

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FRB-03 XMB-02 EB-07 SIL-01 LAB-04 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /043 W

----- 067597

R 022040Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7765

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMCONSUL CURACAO

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS GERAD O'KEEFE, DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL
AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, R.C.I.A.

CARACAS AND CURACAO PLEASE PASS IRO-FIET SECRETARY GENERAL
ELMER FOSTER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, AR

SUBJECT: (1) BANK WORKER HOURS CHANGED; (2) BANK WORKER LEADERS
INDICTED

1. NEW BANKING HOURS (FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.) WENT INTO
EFFECT IN BUENOS AIRES NOVEMBER 1, REQUIRING A CORRESPONDING CHANGE
IN THE BANK EMPLOYEES' WORK SCHEDULE. THE NEW WORKING SCHEDULE--
FROM 9:45 A.M. TO 5:45 P.M.-- ELIMINATES THE FORMERLY WIDESPREAD
PRACTICE AMONG BANK WORKERS OF "MOONLIGHTING" AT PART-TIME
MORNING JOBS AS BOOKKEEPERS OR COMMISSION AGENTS--A TRADI-
TIONAL MEANS OF AUGMENTING FAMILY INCOME AND OFFSETTING DECLIN-
ING WORKER PURCHASING POWER. DURING THE WEEKS PRECEDING THE
SHIFT IN BANKING HOURS, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION IN
THE PRESS AS TO WHETHER THE BANK WORKERS WOULD GO OUT ON STRIKE
IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED CHANGE. THERE WERE REPORTS OF
ATTEMPTS BY SOME BANK WORKER ELEMENTS TO DRUM UP SUPPORT FOR SUCH A
STRIKE. THE GOVERNMENT WAS EVIDENTLY CONCERNED THAT
A STRIKE IN THE BANKING AND FINANCIAL SECTOR WOULD COINCIDE

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WITH THE CURRENT CONFLICT IN THE BUENOS AIRES LIGHT AND POWER

INDUSTRY, WHICH BEGAN IN EARLY OCTOBER, AND POSSIBLY EXPAND TO OTHER LABOR SECTORS INCREASINGLY DISSATISFIED WITH ANTI-LABOR MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT.

2. IN ORDER TO COMPENSATE FOR THE LENGTHENED WORKING DAY AND THE MID-DAY LUNCH, WHICH ARE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHANGE IN THE BANKING SCHEDULE, THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZED AN ADDITIONAL PAYMENT OF UP TO 9,500 PESOS (ABOUT \$38) MONTHLY. WHILE STILL UNHAPPY, THE BANK WORKERS APPARENTLY ACCEPTED THE GOVERNMENT'S SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, AND THE CHANGE IN BANKING HOURS WAS IMPLEMENTED YESTERDAY (NOVEMBER 1) WITHOUT ANY REPORTED OUTWARD MANIFESTATION OF WORKER RESISTANCE. AS VISITING IRO-FIET SECRETARY GENERAL ELMER FOSTER STATED LAST WEEK, THE (INTERVENED) BANK WORKERS' UNION HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT (I.E., GIVEN THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERWHELMING POWER TO IMPOSE ITS WILL IN LABOR DISPUTES BY VIRTUE OF EMERGENCY LEGISLATION SUSPENDING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE AND PROVIDING STIFF JAIL SENTENCES FOR VIOLATORS).

3. IN AN ENTIRELY SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, BUT ONE OF EQUAL INTEREST TO THE R.C.I.A. AND IRO-FIET, AN ARGENTINE COURT HAS ORDERED THE PREVENTATIVE DETENTION OF THREE FORMER BANK WORKER UNION LEADERS ACCUSED OF FORGING DOCUMENTS, FRAUDULENT PRACTICES AND ILLEGAL DEALINGS WITH JUAN AND DAVID GRAIVER, DIRECTORS OF THE BANCO COMERCIAL DE LA PLATA. THE ACCUSED UNION LEADERS ARE JUAN FRANCISCO ESQUERRA, FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ASOCIACION BANCARIO, AND CARLOS COLAZO AND ANUBIS RDVELLA, TWO OTHER EX-MEMBERS OF THE UNION BOARD. THE THREE HAVE BEEN IN CUSTODY FOR MONTHS UNDER EMERGENCY PROVISIONS IN FORCE ADOPTED BY THE MILITARY JUNTA, AWAITING THE OUTCOME OF THE JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION OF THE CHARGES AGAINST THEM. THE COURT'S ACTION, AMOUNTING TO AN INDICTMENT, PLACES THE CASE IN THE JUDICIAL PROCESS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ARGENTINE TRADE UNION LEADERS BEING HELD UNDER EMERGENCY LEGISLATION BECAUSE OF SIMILAR CHARGES, PENDING FURTHER INVESTIGATION. THE BANK WORKER LEADERS ARE THE FIRST OF THESE TO HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO NORMAL JUDICIAL PROCESSES, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THEIR CASE IS AN OUTGROWTH OF, OR IS OTHERWISE CONNECTED TO, THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION INTO THE FINANCIAL DEALINGS (ALSO INVOLVING THE GRAIVER BANK) OF EX-PRESIDENT ISABEL PERON (WHO WAS ALSO INDICTED A FEW DAYS AGO).
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4. THE THREE BANKWORKER LEADERS ARE CHARGED WITH APPROPRIATING HUGE SUMS BELONGING TO THE UNION FOR FINANCIAL DEALS WITH THE GRAIVER FAMILY BANK. IN ISSUING THE INDICTMENT, THE JUDGE SITTING IN THE CASE ATTACHED ESQUERRA'S ASSETS AND THOSE OF THE OTHER TWO UNION LEADERS.
HILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WORKWEEK, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, BANKS, WORKING CONDITIONS, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BUENOS07200
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760409-0481
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761191/aaaadbca.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 MAY 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <30 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: (1) BANK WORKER HOURS CHANGED; (2) BANK WORKER LEADERS INDICTED
TAGS: ELAB, AR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006